"Everything comes to an end, even a Yakut's appetite; and there came a moment when even the 'lean ones' refused more food and the old people fell down, overcome with sleep and repletion. [RCH: at the end of a wedding] The young people had long been awaiting this moment, and now they went out into the meadow and formed themselves into two separate ranks, men in one, and girls in the other. With decorous and mincing steps these two living walls slowly approached each other.

'Ho, boys, ho! Let us enjoy ourselves while we are young! ' chanted one of the men.

'Sing aloud, my throat!' sang a girl.

'Boys, let us dance and laugh while we are still unwed; ere yet the sinews of our strength are drawn out by a woman's little tongue! '

'Girls, let us play while we are still unwed, while we are yet uncaught by the coarse hands of men!'

This was all improvised. Jests, at times coarse, [56] were freely bandied about. On hearing the merry voices some old women, mostly blind, came out of the hut. Their extreme thinness, their unkempt grey hair, their blind eyes and strange dress, gave them a most fantastic appearance, reminding one of the terrible Druid priestesses mentioned in Michelet's 'Histoire de France.' The old women listened attentively to the young people's hokes, and they also improvised songs in which they made mention of lost youth, the sweetness of man's embrace, and the sorrow of infirmity. I quote one of these improvisations which I noted down at the time, as a specimen of the wild poetry breathed by

these untutored songs:

'How welcome is the warmth of the sun to my aged bones! How joyful to dance with you, my children! This may be the last time I shall sing. Soon will the earth cover my sightless eyes. Next year again you will come here to play, but on my grave the young grass will be green. Cold shall I be there, nor can the hearth fire warm my old body. Dance and sing then, O youth!'

She sang with wild energy: 'And I too will dance with you for the last time. For the last time I shall drink the koumiss, and next spring you will gather here again in the sunlight. Then you will remember the old woman, and she will rejoice in her cold grave. She will hear your songs and from the grave her darkened eyes will see you drink the koumiss. And her happy bones will dance to your merry songs.'

14: Krauss--178-179 E-5 (no date) 1888 Yakut
116, 776, 522

Aside from the just mentioned demons and Furies the Yakuts believe also in some less important entities, such as Torbos-abysyta (the demon of the calves), and Kjaljama (the demon of carnal desire). The latter is by no means represented as an agreeable fellow, and [179] he is even thought to be a stammerer. This conception has a certain originality. Whenever the shaman appears in performance of Kjaljama, he makes the Yakuts laugh. They have their fun with him, ask him where he was coming from. Then the shaman (in the name of the demon) replies, he was coming from very far indeed, as far as a crippled fir was tall, and that he had had to stay over night nine times on his journey. Then the demon asks if there were not perhaps some pretty girls in the neighborhood. If the answer is in the affirmative, he suddenly grows merry, and, to the Yakuts immense delight, he makes grimaces. The shaman, too, assumes the role of the Kjaljama for fun.